

**Make Your Home Beautiful.**

Make your home beautiful, bring to it flowers,  
Plant them around you to bud and to bloom;  
Let them give light to your loneliest hours—  
Let them bring light to enliven your gloom;  
If you can do so, oh, make it an Eden,  
Of beauty and gladness almost divine:  
'Twill teach you to long for that home you are  
needing,  
The earth robed in beauty beyond this dark  
time.  
Make home a hive, where all beautiful feelings  
Cluster like bees and their honey-due bring:  
Make it a temple of holy revealings,  
And love its bright angel with 'shadowing wing.'  
Then shall it be, when afar on life's billows,  
Wherever your tempest-tossed children are  
flung,  
They will long for the shades of the home-weeping  
willows,  
And sing the sweet song which their mother  
had sung.

—Sel.

**Faith, What is it?**

BY J. B. LAIR.

Paul says it is 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' What things hoped for? The forgiveness of our sins? We certainly have experienced that, then it is no longer a matter of faith. Is it communion with Christ? Have we not realized that also? Then it is no more a matter of faith, for faith is the substance of things hoped for. 'Hope that is seen (realized) is not hope for what a man seeth (or has realized) why doth he yet hope for, but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' Rom. 8: 24, 15.

Now if you have faith, you are hoping for something that you do not see—have not received, What is it? Put yourself in position now and get ready to answer. You say you have faith, then you are a son of Abraham. Rom. 4: 16. For Abraham is the father of all the faithful. 11 verse. Abraham becomes your father just as soon as you have faith, is it not reasonable that you must believe just what Abraham did. If you believe any thing else than what Abraham believed are you Abraham's son? If you can conceive of a son without a father, you may be a son, but you cannot be a son of Abraham, in the faith unless you believe what he believed. Abraham was made the 'father of all them that believed though he be not circumcised.' 'For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.' Rom. 4: 13. It is faith that makes us heirs, if we 'walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham.' 12 verse. This clinches the argument, that we must have *that faith of our father Abraham*, we must believe what he believed, and hope for what he hoped for, if we are his sons. Then it becomes us to know just what Abraham did believe.

God told Abraham 'that he would make him the father of many nations.' Gen. 17: 4. Abraham believed it. God also told Abraham that 'in thy seed should all the nations of the earth be blest.' Gen. 22: 18. And Abraham believed it. See also Gen. 26: 4, 28: 14.

Now after God had called Abraham out of Chaldea and had brought him into the land that he promised to show him. He told him to look 'northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that thou seeth, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever.' Gen. 13: 15. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates.' Gen. 17: 8 and 35: 12, Ex. 6: 8 etc. Abraham believed all this, and lived and died in this faith, and never 'possessed so much as to set his foot on.' Abraham believed,

1st. That he should be the father of many nations.

2nd. That in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blest.

3rd. And that he and his children should receive for an everlasting possession, the districts of country that God had covenanted to him. His children, or seed here embraces not only his

blood posterity, but all that become his children by faith—by faith in what God promised the father of all the faithful.

The first point does not effect us, it effects Abraham only. The second effects us in this, that if we believe the Lord will perform what he said he would, we shall enjoy the blessings of the nations. Third, the promise of that paragraph is our portion.

That is what Paul defines faith to be the substance of things hoped for. Abrahamic faith reaches out and takes hold of the promises of God by the covenant made to Abraham. Then it is evident that Paul had this covenanted land in his mind when he said faith was the substance of all things hoped for. This glorious land that God loves and is going to bless so wonderfully is *'the thing hoped for.'*

I am aware that this idea will not satisfy most people. They have got too far from the real literal promises of God. No Abrahamic faith was centered in this land, and Paul says of him that 'he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God, and having fully persuaded that what he had promised he would be able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Have we the same faith? Or do we stagger at the promises? If we do not believe it, it is on the account of unbelief, and it is certain that men are not saved in unbelief.

Paul continues, 'Now it was written for his (Abraham's) sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but to us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' Rom. 4: 20-24. Paul tells us plainly that Abraham's righteousness consisted in his believing God able to perform what he had promised, 'And it was imputed unto him for righteousness.' And it shall be imputed unto us if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord. Abraham believed before he saw the resurrection, at least it was not a fact in his day, yet he believed God able to do what he promised, but; now Paul says if we will believe on him who raised up Jesus—i. e. if we believe that he will through Jesus raise us up to enjoy with Abraham, the covenanted land, it will also be counted unto us for righteousness.

There is no plainer teaching in the Bible than this fact, that Abraham's children to all succeeding generations 'were heirs to the promise' and 'all died in the faith not having received the promise, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Heb. 11: 13. 'And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.' 39th verse.

Paul here tells of many that died 'without receiving the promise,' yet their 'faith obtained them a good report,' and *faith* being the substance of things hoped for, they died hoping to receive and enjoy the covenanted land.

How does this kind of faith compare with the faith of today? The teaching now is, 'If you believe, you receive.' 'If you profess faith in God, you are saved.' This however is not gospel faith for the fathers 'obtained a good report, and died without receiving the promise,' for their salvation depends on, as Paul says the 'redemption of our mortal bodies' that they may enjoy the land that God gave to Abraham and his seed.

If believing, as taught at present is salvation, it is a very poor salvation indeed, for we see those professing to have it, encountering all the difficulties of life, the same as other people—they sicken and die just the same. Hence, we cannot see the advantage of such a salvation in fact, and they cannot hope for salvation, if they already have it, 'for hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doeth he yet hope for it, but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' Rom. 8: 24, 26.

If we are his sons, we will receive what they receive, and enjoy just what they will enjoy, of this there can be no doubt.

But I am just coming to the point that I wish to call particular attention to; viz. There was a

process under the law by which all could be his heirs of the promise. I remark that *faith was not sufficient.*

Paul says, 'the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.' Gal. 3: 24, i. e. The law was the schoolmaster to bring the Jews unto the time of Christ,—in other words the 'law' contained the elements of sonship until Christ came, for 'the law and the Prophets were until John,' since then we are not under the law. There is a different process now by which we become sons. The Scriptures truly says, 'we are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.' But it is just as true that it took more under the law, and it takes more now. There is nothing more surprising to the Bible scholar, than to hear people teach that faith is the only requisite to salvation. And many people look with despair on a man who questions the all sufficiency of faith, but the fact is that faith never was sufficient quality in the matter of salvation. True faith was, and is yet the first element in salvation, but after Abraham's faith was tried, the Lord said, 'This is my covenant which ye shall keep between you and me and you and thy seed after thee. Every man, child among you shall be circumcised \* \* \* and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.' Gen. 17: 10, 11. In the 12th verse we learn that circumcision is required of all 'that are born in the house, or bought with money, or of any stranger which is not of thy seed,' and the 14th verse teaches that if 'any be not circumcised he shall be destroyed from among thy people, he hath broken my covenant.' Here we see that circumcision is the condition—circumcision is made the condition to heirship in the Abrahamic covenant, and not faith. But as before stated, this was 'the schoolmaster' or tutor to bring the generations to the time of Christ, since then 'circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commands of God.' 1 Cor. 7: 19.

Paul teaches plainly here, it is not circumcision now, it is keeping of 'the commands of God.' The rite of circumcision being suspended, something else is instituted to take its place, and we now turn to Christ for the example, for as 'he is the way, the truth and the life,' we would naturally look to him for the example. The first thing that we see the Example doing, by way of beginning his mission in the world, is being baptized, and then hear him say, 'thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.'

The failure to be circumcised brought destruction. (Gen. 17: 14) Christ makes the same condition concerning baptism. 'He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' Mark 16: 16. Faith procured the covenant to Abraham, and circumcision the heirship to his posterity, as a nation, hence it became necessary for all, even the children to receive the sign of the covenant. But with us (Gentiles) it is different, for we are not called—not saved as a nation. But after the Jews rejected Christ 'He turned to the Gentiles to take out of them (their nations) a people for his name.'

The Gentiles not being natural heirs of the covenant, they are only accepted as individuals, after they have exercised faith in God, which brings them into proper relation to receive the rite, (baptism) which makes them heirs.

Under the law it was necessary to get into the covenant which was done by circumcision. Now it is just as necessary to get into Christ, which is done by baptism, as the following Scripture will show; viz, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Gal. 3: 27. 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.' Rom. 6: 3.

I wish before closing this chapter to call attention to the fact that neither of the *three distinct promises* made to Abraham have fully been fulfilled.

It was said to Abraham that he should be 'a father of many nations.' This is not a fact yet, there has only been two nations, that even existed, of his posterity that the Bible speaks of, hence it is yet in the future, and as the two nations shall be united, and never to be two nations any more, and